

# Truth for Today

*The Bible Explained*

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## New Things: A New and Living Way to approach God

Today we begin our talk with an outline in verse:

*There is a new way, Father,  
To Thee in heaven above.  
A way in Christ's blood grounded -  
Shed for our souls in love.  
'Tis through the veil we enter,  
The Manhood of our Lord.  
Now magnified in Glory;  
His name be e'er adored.*

*Father, the way is living  
And cannot be displaced.  
A way that is perpetual  
And by Thy Spirit graced.  
We enter in with boldness  
As free from guilt of sin.  
With true hearts, we approach Thee;  
Our praise and worship bring.*

*Our Great High Priest hath entered  
With blood without compare.  
Upon the throne 'twas sprinkled  
And 'twas found perfect there.  
Father, how precious to Thee -  
The blood shed by Thy Son.  
And we, Thy redeemed children,  
Proclaim the life it won!*

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Have you been made fit for the presence of God? If you're a real Christian, then Hebrews 10 gives you the assurance that you are. Hebrews 10 sets forth the way in which the believer has been prepared. Hebrews 10:1-18 show that his conscience has been purged. That is to say, he is positive that he will no longer come under judgment for sin, for Christ has already borne that judgment on his behalf. As a result, he can now boldly enter, in spirit, the "Holy of Holies" which represents the very presence of God (Hebrews 10:19-22). Furthermore, each believer is also able:

- To be steadfast in holding to the body of Christian doctrine (Hebrews 10:23-31);
- To withstand persecution for his faith (Hebrews 10:32-34); and
- To go on resolutely in dependence upon God (Hebrews 10:35-39).

In the old way of approach to God (in the days of the Jewish tabernacle and, latterly, the temple) only one person was able to enter into the holiest of all, namely, the high priest. We read in Hebrews 9:6-8: "*Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.*" For further details of what is called the "Day of Atonement" read Leviticus 16.

So the children of Israel had to rely on the high priest and the blood of animal sacrifices in order that their sins could be covered for a period of one year. However, individual Israelites could also bring sin offerings to the tabernacle's gate when they thought they were required. Even these had to be repeated because, as we all know, we all sin very frequently. In total contrast to this, the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf is "*once and for all*" (Hebrews 7:27,

Hebrews 9:12). Remarkable! No repetition of that sacrifice is required. Knowing this, the hymn writer, Isaac Watts (1674-1748), wrote:

*Not all the blood of beasts  
On Jewish altars slain  
Could give the guilty conscience peace,  
Or wash away its stain.*

*But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,  
Took all our guilt away,  
A sacrifice of nobler name  
And richer blood than they.*

Today, every Christian is free in his devotions to enter the very presence of God by a new and living way. This is seen in Hebrews 10:19-20 where we read: *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.”* Therefore, in the rest of this talk we will seek answers to the following questions:

1. What is the Holiest?
2. In what manner can we approach God?
3. What is the ground of our acceptance?
4. What is meant by the veil?
5. Who is the High Priest over the house of God?
6. What are the conditions for drawing near?
7. What are our responsibilities as a result?

## 1. What is the Holiest?

We begin by asking, “What is the Holiest?” The answer to this is most easily seen in the book of Exodus. In Exodus 25:8-9 we read: *“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.”*

It was a deep desire of God to live among His people. Therefore, He gave Moses specific instructions for the building of a dwelling place called a “tabernacle”. Its basic structure consisted of a large open court area bordered by a 5 cubit high fence of fine linen. It was 100 cubits long and 50 cubits wide. Centrally, but towards the western end was the tabernacle structure formed from boards 10 cubits high. It was 30 cubits long and 10 cubits wide. (see Exodus 27:9-19). Note, I have given the dimensions in cubits because, historically, there are various lengths of cubits. However, the common cubit was about 46 cm long (for those who wish to convert the measures). Various coverings were spread over the structure to form the tent. A veil was hung within this tent (see Exodus 26:33) dividing it into two parts called the “Holy Place” and the “Holy of Holies”. The Holy of Holies was a square space with sides each measuring 10 cubits.

Once the tabernacle had been completed and furnished to the design set out by God, we read in Exodus 40:34: *“Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”* It was in the Holy of Holies that the Lord dwelt. This was, in turn, witnessed by the cloud of His presence rising above the tabernacle. It was into the Holy of Holies (the very presence of God) that the high priest would go once a year on the Day of Atonement.

Overall, the structure symbolises the heavens. We know this from Hebrews 9:24-28 where we read: *“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us...”* So Christians who enter the holiest are entering, by faith, heaven (the very presence of God). Oh, that we were more conscious of this! It would encourage us to live sanctified lives and approach God with a deeper reverence.

## 2. In What Manner Do We Approach God?

Appropriately, this leads us to the question: “In What Manner Do We Approach God?” As the Lord’s redeemed, we are able to approach God with *“boldness”* (Hebrews 10:19). The Greek word used in Hebrews 10:19 means to have “freedom of utterance”. So we may approach God with the absolute confidence that we are acceptable to Him. We have already mentioned the Christian’s purged conscience; but here extend the thought a little more. In Hebrews 10:2 we are told that it is the worshipper who has a purged conscience. This not only shows his past fear of judgment is completely removed because God has dealt with all his sins; but that he can approach God directly in order to express due homage to Him as a worshipper.

### 3. What is the ground of our acceptance?

This leads us to ask: "What is the ground of our acceptance?" Again the answer lies in Hebrews 10:19. Our freedom of approach is established by *"the blood of Jesus."* The hymn writer George Stebbins (1846-1945) put it this way:

*"I will remember now no more,"  
God's faithful Word has said,  
"The follies and the sins of him  
For whom My Son has bled."  
Not all my well-remembered sins  
Can startle or dismay;  
The precious blood atones for all  
And bears my guilt away.*

Hence, we read that we may be bold to enter the presence of God by the blood of Jesus. There is amazing power in the blood of Jesus! It is indeed our passport to heaven. We know that, among other things, His blood cleanses from all sin (1 John 1:7); redeems (Ephesians 1:7, Revelation 5:9); justifies (Romans 5:9); brings peace (Colossians 1:20); reconciles (Colossians 1:20); and brings us near to God (Ephesians 2:13).

On the one hand, it is the blood of Christ's sacrifice that makes us suitable for God's presence. On the other, it is way in which God values that blood which sets His mind to accept us. Do you remember that, in the Old Testament, the blood was sprinkled before and upon the mercy seat in the Holiest? (see Leviticus 16:14-27). The action of sprinkling places the blood under the evaluation of God. Therefore, we may see, from this picture, that God has assessed the blood of Christ and found it invaluable - perfect. It has met every need of God towards man and of man towards God. Now, we are accepted by God in the Son who gave His life for us (Ephesians 1:6).

### 4. What is meant by the veil?

This brings us to consider the next question: "What is meant by the veil?" The new and living way that has been consecrated (or, established) for us is *"through the veil, that is to say, his flesh"* (Hebrews 10:20). In the old economy, the veil was a barrier that prevented entry into the Holy of Holies. We read of it in Exodus 36:35: *"And he [i.e. Moses] made a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: with cherubims made he it of cunning work."*

Just as the tabernacle's sections symbolise the heavens, so the veil foreshadows the beauty of Christ in His manhood. In John 1:14 we see *"the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us"*. His glory was seen *"as that of the only begotten of the Father"*. So the Word who was God, the Source of life and the Creator of all stepped into manhood. So when we examine the veil, we see the wonder of Christ as a man. There is indeed a "Man in the Glory" and this Man is, Himself, glorious!

The veil was made from fine linen which in Revelation 19:3 symbolises the righteousnesses of the saints - in other words, their good works. So we immediately see the glory of the Lord Jesus as the perfect Servant. He said, *"I must work the works of Him that sent me..."* (John 9:4).

The blue was a constant reminder to the Jews of the commandments of the Lord and a prompt to do them (Numbers 15:38). In regard to Christ, we see Him as the heavenly Man, the Lord from out of heaven who fulfilled the law of God. He is the Son of God!

The purple reminds us of both riches and royalty. In Luke 16:19 the rich man was said to wear purple. The litter of King Solomon had a covering of purple (Song of Solomon 3:10). Esther 8:15 shows that, along with blue and white, it was part of the royal apparel of a Gentile king. In John 19:2, the soldiers placed on Jesus a purple robe mocking Him as a king. It tells us of the majesty of the Man Christ Jesus - *"the King of the Jews"* (see Matthew 2:2, Matthew 27:11, Matthew 27:37), yea, the *"KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS"* (Revelation 19:6).

In scripture, scarlet is linked to the firstborn, the valiant man, the sacrifice for sin and the deliverer. Overall it speaks of the dignity of Christ as a man fulfilling all these roles. He is the pre-eminent Man. As a bride of old exclaimed, *"He is altogether lovely!"* (see Song of Solomon 5:16)

Embroidered into the veil were cherubim. The book of Ezekiel shows that these living creatures are the executors of God's judgment and the protectors of His throne (see Ezekiel 10:1-22, Ezekiel 11:22 and Ezekiel 41:18-25). All judgment has now passed to the Lord Jesus as the Son of God. We read in John 5:22-23: *"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."*

Therefore, Christ as Man in Glory is represented by the veil. There is no entry into the presence of God except by Him. As He Himself said in John 14:6: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

## 5. Who is the High Priest over the house of God?

The next question to consider is: "Who is our High Priest?" The colours of the veil are found in the ephod of the high priest of old. His garments were for glory and beauty (Exodus 28:2). This parallels Hebrews 2:7-9 where we find Christ *"crowned with glory and honour"*. He is our Great High Priest. In Hebrews 8:1-2, we read: *"We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."* Christ Jesus is the minister of a new, divine system of blessing for men. It is a system, introduced by God Himself.

This is confirmed as the author of Hebrews describes the various ways in which Christ is a greater priest than Aaron from Hebrews 4:14-7:28. He is qualified to be our high priest because He is a man who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; because He was tested in spirit, soul and body as we are, yet without sin (see Hebrews 4:15). Therefore, He who lives after the power of an endless life is not only able to intercede for us, but to sympathise, succour and support us. He is indeed the high priest over the house of God, the church of the living God.

## 6. What are the conditions for drawing near?

Next, we will consider the question: "What are the conditions for drawing near?" Hebrews 10:22 provides us with the answer: *"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."*

When we draw near to God, it must be with a true heart. The heart is primarily the seat of the will as well as being the fount of love. This is a heart that has been renewed and is right with God. It is geared to His will. It is single and sincere and tempered with love.

Also, our approach to God is in full assurance of faith. This shows that we have full confidence in our acceptance by God and all that has been revealed to us through His word.

Furthermore, we know that we can approach Him with our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. The word *"evil"* is that which brings with it pain and sorrow. The verb *"sprinkled"* relates to the sprinkling of blood as shown in the Old Testament consecration of the priests (see Exodus 29:21). For Christians, it refers to the preciousness of the blood of Christ that makes us acceptable to God. We know we have been cleansed and, also, that we are free from the guilt of sin.

Additionally, we are to have our bodies washed with pure water. Again, the priests of old had to be bathed all over (Exodus 29:4). Applying this to ourselves, we are to have been bathed in the water of God's word (John 3:3-5). It is a moral cleansing that sets us apart to God at new birth; but we are still to regularly imbibe the word in order that our Christian walk (represented by feet) and service (represented by hands) are kept pure (Exodus 30:19). We are to be free from any defilement when approaching God. Interestingly, the Lord Jesus is currently involved in cleansing and sanctifying the church by the washing of water by the word (Ephesians 5:25-26). This could well be one of the reasons we must approach God through Him.

## 7. What are our responsibilities as a result?

In conclusion, we will seek to answer the question: "What are the responsibilities that result from these things?" These responsibilities are found in Hebrews 10:23-25.

- a. We are to hold fast the acknowledgement of our faith without wavering. We are not to be afraid of confessing our faith and standing by it (Hebrews 10:23);
- b. We are to consider one another in order to promote love and good works (Hebrews 10:24). Love is that which reveals the giving nature of God. Good works are those done in the will of God, to benefit others with God getting the glory.
- c. We are not to turn away from gathering together with fellow believers (Hebrews 10:25). Some may say that you don't have to go to church to be a Christian; but no man is an island in Christianity. We need one another and, like the early disciples, should be steadfast in attending gatherings for the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer (see Acts 2:42).

**Conclusion**

What a wonderful passage! In it we have found spiritual truth that shows we are acceptable to God as worshippers, on the one hand; and challenges us to obedience on the other. We have been encouraged to boldly enter into the very presence of God by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:19) and to hold fast the confession of our faith (Hebrews 10:22). These two things indicate that we form a holy and a royal priesthood. Furthermore, we have been directed to consider one another, stimulating fellow believers to love and to good works (Hebrews 10:23). Finally, we must realise that God wants us to attend the gatherings of the church in order that we may learn, serve and encourage one another (Hebrews 10:25). We are to *“follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart”* (2 Timothy 2:22). In this way, we will *“grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”* (see 2 Peter 3:18). We will become more mature Christians.

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